
Outstanding Business - For Profit

Sage Spa Salon, owned by Justin Bigart and Stephanie Orler,
Nominated by: Yellowstone Area System CMT
Julie Foster, Montana Jobs Network

Sage Spa Salon was nominated by both the Yellowstone Area System Community Management Team (CMT), and Julie Foster of the Montana Jobs Network. Sage Spa Salon is owned by Justin Bigart and Stephanie Orler. Sage Spa Salon is an innovative young company that employs more than 40 Montanans. Since December 2003, Sage Spa Salon has been operating a program called "Jobs by Design". Through this program, Sage Spa Salon gives away one complimentary makeover per month to a client of each organization they participate with. They partner with public and private organizations offering services in Gallatin, Park, Flathead, and Lake counties, as well as plans for the Billings area. Sage Spa Salon has shown that a person's employability is heavily tied to their self-confidence. The "Jobs by Design" program helps increase the confidence, employability and successful job placement of Montana's workforce system clients.

Outstanding Business - Not-for-Profit

Student Assistance Foundation - accepted by Jim Stipcich
Nominated by: Kelly Chapman, Executive Vice President of Foundation
Activities, Student Assistance Foundation

The Student Assistance Foundation was nominated by Kelly Chapman, Executive Vice President of Foundation Activities for The Student Assistance Foundation. The Foundation stands out as an exceptional business. Based on their number of employees, they are one of the top 20 employers in Lewis and Clark County and one of the largest non-profit organizations in the state of Montana. It is a highly successful Montana business that competes at a national level in a clean industry benefiting Montanans. SAF has been active in numerous efforts to reinforce the value of education and the important role it plays in local, state, and regional economic development efforts. Through coordination with numerous organizations, strategic planning efforts, technological advances and employee training and incentive programs, they have demonstrated their commitment to serving the students of Montana.

Outstanding Individual - Public Sector

Linda Beck, Big Sky Economic Development Authority and
Big Sky Economic Development Corporation

Nominated by: Tom Frisby, Manager, Billings Job Service Workforce Center

Linda was nominated by Tom Frisby, Manager of the Billings Job Service Workforce Center. She is the Director of Business Outreach and Recruitment for Big Sky Economic Development Authority. Linda has become the “hub” of the Workforce and Economic Development Wheel in Yellowstone County. She is a superb net worker who operates effectively at the center of the wheel linking education, business, government and labor union organizations together forming the “spokes” of this wheel. Over the last two and a half years, Linda has fostered an integrated, demand-driven Workforce and Economic Development System, and created the Business Expansion And Retention Program (BEAR) in many regions of Montana. Her leadership, creativity, and expertise are having a positive impact on workforce and economic development not only in Billings, but all across Montana.

Outstanding Individual - Private Sector

Elizabeth ‘Liz’ (Harris) Marchi, Montana West Economic Development

Nominated by: Lyle W. Phillips

Liz was nominated by Lyle W. Phillips. Liz led the Jobs Now capital campaign that closed March 2005, raising \$1.5 million from private investors to support economic development initiatives that will help provide good jobs for Montana’s workforce. She has been a leader in bringing quality businesses to Montana. Through her leadership and organizational skills she has worked with a number of businesses, helping them to relocate to Northwestern Montana. This resulted in hundreds of jobs for Montanans. Liz’s efforts on behalf of the workforce of Montana, create jobs that allow Montanans an opportunity to use their skills or learn new marketable skills, and provide support for their families.

Outstanding Program - Public Sector

Bitterroot Workforce System Community Management Team; Marlin Neaves, Chair
Nominated by: Patti Furniss, Manager,
Bitterroot Job Service Workforce Center

Bitterroot Workforce System Community Management Team (CMT) was nominated by Patti Furniss, Manager of the Bitterroot Job Service Workforce Center. Bitterroot Workforce System's CMT has operated on fluid leadership to meet the needs of the Ravalli County workforce, with no one partner leading the effort. The CMT was granted a One-Stop Development Grant to enhance coordination and effort. This allowed them to be responsive to businesses and job seekers, which enabled them to conduct a countywide survey to learn how well the public was aware of the Workforce System and partners. Through Training Academies, Job Fairs and seminars, the CMT has identified, evaluated and defined the workforce services necessary for the Bitterroot economy. The Bitterroot Workforce System CMT works to reduce barriers, and has made services seamless and accessible through many venues.

Outstanding Program - Private Sector

No nominees this year.